The Lutheran Doctrine of the Lord's Supper

Its Biblical and Scientific Basis

By

J. A. HALL, D.D.

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PREFACE

For the Christian the court of final appeal in all matters of doctrine is the Word of God. Not to any particular passage, but to the plain teaching of the Scripture as a whole. On no point is the teaching of the Word more explicit than on the fact of our infinite need of Christ. But the Christ that is needed is the historic Christ, the human and the divine, the Son of God and the Son of man. The writers of the New Testament know no other Christ than the One who "for us and for our salvation was *incarnate* by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary and was *made man.*"

Redemption requires the human as well as the divine in the Person of the Redeemer. This is stated again and again by the writers of the New Testament. Though they present the Redeemer as a divine Person, the work that He does is always connected with His perfect manhood. The mediator is (1 Tim. 2 : 5) "the *man* Christ Jesus." Through His human obedience unto

death He "condemned sin in the flesh," made atonement for our transgressions and thereby secured our justification.

But justification, great as it is, is not sufficient. The work begun in justification must needs be consummated in our personal renewal and growth in the divine life. This Christ accomplishes through His self-communication. "I am the vine, ye are the branches." We live only as our life is derived from Him. He, the "Son of man," is the bread which came down from heaven upon which we must feed. "I," said Jesus, "am the bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat this bread he shall live forever, and the bread that I will give is my flesh." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him."

Yet to this plain teaching of the Word, doubt has ever opposed the question, "How can it be?" "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" To this question the theologians of the Lutheran Church have replied, that the way and manner of this self-communication of Christ in the

Sacrament is a "mystery." Here stood Luther, and here his followers have in the main stood. They have insisted on the fact of the actual presence of the body of Christ "with," "in" and "under" the bread and the wine, but have attempted no dogmatic explanation of the mystery.

Nevertheless, to the mind of the author, the question as to the way and manner of this self-communication (and by this we mean the communication of the whole Christ) is one that cannot be ignored. It is indeed a mystery. But a mystery is not a thing into which we are forbidden to look. On the contrary, it is our privilege as well as our duty to search out even the deep things of God. Particularly is this our obligation when the mystery in question seems to contradict other facts of our experience.

This is the author's apology for what may appear to some to be an irreverent appeal from the Scripture to the teaching of science in relation to the nature of matter. For himself he accepts the fact of the communication of the body and blood of our Lord in the Sacrament solely and entirely on the authority of the word of God. It is only in

reply to the question, How can it be? that his appeal is to the teaching of science. The gift of Luther was a marvelous intuition that enabled him to grasp the essential, that is, the saving truths of Christianity, and proclaim them anew to the world. The task of his sons is to explicate and vindicate his theology as best they may in the light which, since the day of the great reformer, God has given to men.

J. A. H.

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"Sacraments and prayer have this in common, that the relation of the Christian to God in them is not merely one of thought and contemplation, but immediate and practical. . . . The essential difference consists in this: the sacred tokens of the new covenant contain also an actual communication of the being and life of the risen Christ, who is the Redeemer and Perfecter, not only of man's spiritual but of man's *corporeal* nature."—*Martensen, "Christian Dogmatics," p. 418.*

"If the Socinian and Zwinglian estimate of the Sacraments had been that of the Church of Christ, the Sacraments would long ago have been abandoned as useless ceremonies. But the Church has always seen in them

not mere outward signs (as Calvinism asserts), which are tokens of grace received independently of them, but signs which, through the power of the promise and the words of Christ, effect what they signify. They are 'effectual signs of grace and God's goodwill toward us, by which He doth work invisibly in us.' "—*Liddon's "Bampton Lectures," p. 480.*

"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me."—*Paul, 1 Cor. 11 : 23, 24.*

The Lutheran Doctrine of the Lord's Supper

"In regard to the Lord's Supper, they teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are dispensed to the communicants in the Lord's Supper; and they disapprove those who teach otherwise."—Augsburg Confession, Art. X.

The Confessions of the Lutheran Church resemble those of the Church of Rome in this, that they teach a real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist. The teaching of the two Churches, however, differs in this respect: the Roman and Greek Churches maintain that there is a change in substance in the bread and wine immediately consequent on the consecration, so that the forms of bread and wine remaining, the whole bread has been changed into the body and the whole wine has been changed into the blood of Christ,[1] whereas the Lutheran Church teaches

[1] Appendix, Note A.

only a *presence* of the body and blood of Christ *in* and *under* the bread and the wine, incapable of further explanation. Thus it is said in the Augsburg Confession: "It is taught concerning the Lord's Supper, that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those who partake, and those who teach otherwise are censured."

So also it is asserted in the Articles of Smalkald: "Concerning the Sacrament of the Altar, we believe that the bread and wine in the Supper are the *true body and blood of Christ,* and are to be given to and taken by not only pious but wicked Christians."

In Luther's "Catechismus Major," the question is asked, "What then is the Sacrament of the Altar?" and the reply is given: "It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ *in* and *under* the bread and wine instituted and commanded by the word of Christ to be eaten and drunk by us Christians." The Formula Concordia states: "We believe that in the Supper of the Lord the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present, and that they are truly distributed and taken with the bread and wine. We

believe that the words of the testament of Christ are not to be otherwise received than as the words themselves literally express, so that the bread does not signify the absent body of Christ, and the wine the absent blood of Christ, but that by means of a sacramental union the bread and the wine are truly the body and blood of Christ"; and, some pages further on: "Further, we reject and condemn the Capernaitic eating of the body of Christ, which the Sacramentarians maliciously ascribe to us, contrary to the testimony of their own conscience, after so many protestations on our part, in order that they may bring our doctrine into disrepute with their hearers, representing, forsooth, as if we teach that the body of Christ is to be torn with the teeth and digested in the human body like any other food. But we believe and assert, according to the clear words of the testament of Christ, a true but supernatural eating of the body of Christ, just as we also teach the blood of Christ is truly but supernaturally drunk. But this no one can comprehend with the human senses or reason; wherefore, in this matter, as in other articles also of the faith, our intellect ought to submit itself to the obedience

of Christ. For this mystery is revealed in the word of God alone, and is understood by faith alone." Further on the Formula of Concord declares: "It is taught that just as there are in Christ two distinct and unchanged natures inseparably united, so in the Holy Supper there are two different substances, viz., natural bread and the true natural body of Christ, at the same moment present in the administration of the Sacrament."

The same conception is expressed, though in a more guarded and philosophic manner, by some of our more modern theologians. "The Lutheran doctrine," says Martensen, "is opposed not only to the doctrine of transubstantiation, but to the Calvinistic separation of heaven and earth likewise; Christ is not in a literal manner separate from His believing people, so as that they must go to heaven in order to find Him. Christ is on the right hand of God, but the right hand of God is everywhere (*dextra Dei ubique est*). And, therefore, He is present wholly and entirely (*totus et integer*) in His Supper, wherein He in an especial manner *wills* to be. There are not in the ordinance two acts, one heavenly and the

other earthly, distinct from each other, but the heavenly is comprehended in the earthly and visible act, and is organically united therewith, thus constituting one sacramental act. The heavenly substance is communicated *in, with* and *under* the earthly substances. And as the sacramental communion is not a partaking of the corporeal nature of Christ apart from His spiritual nature, no more is it a mere partaking of the spiritual nature of Christ apart from His corporeity; it is one and undivided, a spiritual and corporeal communion."[1]

Such, then, is the Lutheran doctrine of the presence of Christ in the Sacrament, as stated in her Confessions and by her theological writers. She confesses the mystery of the presence; that it is a thing experienced by faith yet incomprehensible by the natural reason.

Briefly stated then, the Lutheran doctrine is this: The Lord's Supper, while indeed a memorial act, commemorating the passion of our Lord, is vastly more. It is a means of grace in the full sense of the term, since there, in, with and under

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[1] Martensen, "Christian Dogmatics," p. 436.

the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ are truly and substantially present and are received with the bread and the wine. The two substances, the terrestrial and the celestial, are there in sacramental and mystical union. She rejects the doctrine of consubstantiation, which teaches that the two substances are merged into a new and third substance. She holds that these two substances are actually offered and received by the believer in the Holy Eucharist; that the reception is indeed an oral one, not Capernaitic, but in a supernatural sense. The infidel and the wicked, though for such the Sacrament is not intended, receive Christ's body and blood, but not to their benefit, but to their condemnation. To avoid this result a proper preparation, admonition, confession and absolution are, according to the order of the Church, to precede the solemnization of the Sacrament.

The effect and blessings of the Lord's Supper, properly received, are, the *forgiveness of sins, imparting of new life,* comfort to the troubled conscience, and, through communion with Christ, the *increase of sanctification.* Now to this conception of the Sacrament as the offering of the

true body and blood of Christ, a variety of considerations clearly point.

1. It conforms to the words of the institution: "This is my body; this is my blood." Here Luther stood, and here his true followers stand. Faith and creed here rest and must rest entirely upon the plain, unambiguous word of Christ, "This is my body." He says it and wills it, and He has all power to fulfill His word. He, the living, glorified Christ, in both His human and divine natures, is really present in the fulfillment of His promise. For this union of the divine and the human in Christ was never broken. Though exalted to the right hand of God, Christ is forever the Christ, i.e., divine and human. No other Christ has ever or can ever exist. Where He is present, He is present not in one, but in both of the natures which together constitute Him the Christ. Therefore, believing that He is really and truly present in the Sacrament, we also believe His words, "This is my body; this is my blood." [1]

2. The conception in which the true body and blood of Christ are regarded as truly present and

[1] Appendix, Note B.

offered in the Sacrament is alone in harmony with the teaching of the Scripture concerning the person of Christ.

Nothing is clearer in the teaching of the Word than the fact of the union of the divine and the human in Christ. To this the Lutheran Church gives her hearty assent. She accepts without reservation the statements of the ecumenical creeds as they bear on the person of our Lord. In the Christ she sees the God-man, the divine and human natures united in such a manner that, in this personal union each of the two natures retains its own proper being and peculiarities. She believes that the Son of God, from all eternity begotten of the Father, took upon Himself in the moment of His conception of the Virgin Mary, the complete human nature, except original sin.[1] From this union of the divine person with the human nature there resulted a union and communion of the two natures, not in the sense of a merely nominal, unreal combination, nor a merely accidental transient meeting of the two natures, but a real indissoluble

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[1]Appendix, Note C.

union. We accordingly reject the misconception that the two natures in this personal union give up their essential characteristics or peculiarities, so that, through the giving up of the characteristics of each, a new person, but not the true God-man has resulted. By the union in this incarnation, the peculiarities of God and of man are not annulled, but the divine and human natures are inseparably and eternally united. This position taken by the Lutheran Church is the only one that fully corresponds with the fundamental principles of Christianity, viz., *actual reconciliation between God and man: the supernatural and the natural; the infinite and the finite; the real and the ideal.*

It acknowledges without any arbitrary restriction, the personality of Him through whom the reconciliation was accomplished, and at the same time does not confuse the divine and the human, the spiritual and the natural. From this position results as a logical and theological necessity, the Lutheran doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum,* upon which, as some of our theologians hold, the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper either stands or falls. Concerning the doc-

trine of the *communicatio idiomatum,* we shall speak further along.

3. Only the Lutheran doctrine of the Sacrament is in harmony with the teaching of the Word as it bears on the vital relation of Christ to the believer. No fact is more clearly set forth in the Scripture than this, that it is not an external Christ; but, on the contrary, a Christ received and appropriated who saves. To be saved man must be organically united with Christ and Christ with man. The mysterious union of which Christ speaks in the words, "I in you and you in me," can in no sense be a reality so long as Christ remains without. It is not sufficient for our redemption that He became incarnate, that He lived a life of perfect obedience, or that He died and rose again for our justification. His life, His death, His resurrection, all must be ours; and this is possible only through His personal indwelling. He must not only do a work for us, He must also live within us. So long as He stands without, an object of contemplation or even of worship, He cannot save. This is why Jesus said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." "He

that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood *dwelleth in me and I in him.*"

Now it was this truth that Jesus presented under the analogy of bread. For the distinctive characteristic of bread is its ability to nourish every part of our complex organization. It satisfies the whole man on the physical side of his being. And what bread is to the body, that Christ is to the whole man. "I," said Jesus, "am the true bread which came down from heaven." On this bread man—that is, the whole man—must feed. Here emerge two truths.

First, the qualification of Christ to satisfy every need of man. He is divine and human; the heavenly and the earthly. Not one, apart from the other, but both in eternal and indissoluble union. Wherever He is, He is as the Christ, the God-man. Accordingly when He offers Himself, it is not a part, but the whole Christ that is offered.

The second truth is that man himself is double. He is both spirit and body inseparably conjoined. If, therefore, man, as man, is to be nourished, both sides of his being must be fed. For man is not spirit alone, but spirit and body. Subtract

the body and he ceases to be man. Subtract the spirit and he is no longer man but an animal. Body and spirit, spirit and body, this is man. From this it follows that if man is to be sustained in all that he is, he must needs be nourished not on one side of his nature alone but on both. Provision must be made for his true and real body as well as his soul. This is why Christ must communicate His whole self to man as food. This is why He must give us His body to eat and His blood to drink. For it must not be forgotten that the true *body* of man needs the Christ as well as the soul. Both hunger for God and both cry out for redemption.

This seems to be the meaning of Paul in Rom. 8 : 22, 23, "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but we ourselves also which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Theologians may have overlooked it; the so-called disciples of modern culture may have ignored it; nevertheless in the Scripture the fact is emphasized—a fact involved in the very idea

of humanity—that a merely spiritual redemption cannot satisfy the whole man. Full redemption must go deeper than that; it must include the body as well. The significance as well as the glory of the resurrection is in this, that it promises a redeemed body and assures the eternal union of the two natures which God in the beginning joined together when He created man out of the dust of the earth and breathed into him His own life.[1] It was the hope of a redeemed body—a body ransomed from sin and the grave that inspired the utterance of the psalmist in Ps. 16 : 9: "My *flesh also* shall rest in hope. For Thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy One to see corruption." And again in the second verse of the 84th Psalm: "My heart and my *flesh* cry aloud for the living God." It was the hope of a redeemed body that inspired the soul of the Chaldean seer when he thought of the time when in his *flesh* he should see God. No, it is not man's spirit only that cries for God or that pants for Him "as the hart panteth after the

[1] Appendix, Note D.

waterbrooks." It was the voice of the body as well that Paul heard above the wail of the groaning creation; for the body as truly as the spirit is an indispensable *element* of the personality of man.

The writers of the New Testament have no sympathy with that dualism that separates between the body and the spirit or that puts the one in antithesis to the other. "Know ye not," says Paul, "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" "For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." But they do distinguish between the body (*soma*), the material organism composed of different parts, and the flesh (*sarx*), which is mere material substance. They teach that the material, the gross matter that enters into the constitution of our bodies here, shall molder into the dust from which it came; but that the body, which is the temple of the spirit, will survive the grave. That, as Christ rose from the dead with a glorified body, "the first born among many brethren," so all who believe in Him shall rise again with a

spiritual body; i.e., with a body that shall perfectly answer to its true ideal as the temple of the Holy Ghost. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we *have* a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Accordingly when we speak of the resurrection of the body, we do not mean literally these sensible materials entering into and constituting the gross flesh that is the *sarx,* which in this life even are in continual state of change, and are continually vanishing. We mean the ideal, the eternal body; the house that we *now* have and that is "not made with hands." This is the body that awaits redemption through Christ. And the point that must not be overlooked is precisely this, that if Christ is the true bread, then there is of necessity that in Him that answers to its needs. He must satisfy the need not only of the spirit of man, but of his true body as well; for in no sense can it be said that He is the true bread unless He

satisfies all that is of the very essence of our humanity. But just this, because He is divine and human, the ideal and the real, He and He alone is able to do. How significant, then, that He should bless the bread and say of it, "This is my body." It is just as though He had said, "What this bread is to your physical needs, that I am to your true selves. As it satisfies your physical hunger, so do I satisfy your eternal—the hunger that is felt by your inner and real selves. But you must partake of me. Of me, that is, of the whole Christ, *for my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed.*"

But when it is said that man's true body requires the bread that Christ offers in the Eucharist, it may be well to define more clearly our meaning, for here there must be no misunderstanding. For it is not the sensuous or physical body of Christ that it offered in the Sacrament. This error is condemned by our Confessions. They deny that it is a Capernaitic eating, a "tearing of the flesh with the teeth," as Luther speaks of it. Nor is it the sensuous body of man—that flesh and blood of which it is said that it "profiteth nothing," that needs the heavenly nourish-

ment offered in the Holy Sacrament. By the true body we do not mean the gross substance that constitutes the sensuous that is in man and which must needs return to the dust from which it was taken. This is not man's true body, i.e., the body that endures through all outward changes; and because it endures is proof of our continued identity. "There is," says Paul, "a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." It is the latter, viz., the body which on account of its plastic nature is capable of being shaped by the spirit, and thereby fitted to become its permanent organ that we have in mind. The body invisible and indestructible, which dwells already in the present outward body, and which, because of its capacity of being leavened by the spirit, becomes the spirit's organ. It is to this body that redemption is promised. It is indeed a true body, but a body spiritualized and adapted to the needs of the spirit.[1]

[1] A spiritual body is not a mere ghost or spirit body, but a physical body spiritualized and adapted to the needs of the perfect spirit. In 1 Cor. 15 : 40-42, Paul is speaking of the difference between the natural and the spiritual body. It would seem from the 41st verse that he shared the current opinion among the Jews

And this being the case, it will need its appropriate food; it too, as well as the spirit, will need to appropriate Christ, for it is not a part, but the whole man that requires the bread that came down from heaven. And just here is the point. It is not the spiritual, as such, in Christ that is suited to be the nourishment of man's spiritual body. It is Christ's true body by which our true bodies are made perfect and glorified. It is the touch of His glorified body that leavens and glorifies ours. Spirit cannot be food for body any more than body can become food for pure spirit. Yet both our spirit and body need appropriate nourishment, for both together constitute man.

So it comes that Christ must sustain to the whole person the relation that bread sustains to the physical body. He must satisfy all of our essential needs. But to do this He must come

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that in the life to come the righteous would have shining bodies. The Jew thought of the spirit as a kind of thin matter, an ether, endowed with the property of permanence, luminous, and the power to penetrate all things. However that may be, the words *egeiro* and *anastasis* suggest the idea of the resurrection body springing out of the mortal body as grain springs out of the seed sown in the ground. (Appendix, Note E.)

to us in a way other than that of His written Word. He must somehow communicate to us His true body. And this is involved in the very idea of His person. Because He is divine and human inseparably conjoined, wherever He is, He is in both of His natures. Accordingly to really feed on Christ is to feed on Him in both of His natures. In no other sense can He rightly be called the true bread; for only as He satisfies the whole man is He our true sustenance. Without the divine in Him our spirits would hunger in vain. Without the human in Him our true bodies would go unsatisfied. It is because of the fact that He possesses both and communicates both that He becomes our complete satisfaction.

But down deep in our hearts, and born out of our unbelief, there arises the question, How can it be? Is not body, whether it be His or ours, in its very idea material? Are not extension, visibility, impenetrability essential qualities of body? Is not its nature such as to preclude the possibility of its being at two or more places at the same time? How then can Christ's body be in heaven, at the right hand of God, and here on the earth where His disciples meet to commemo-

rate His passion? How can it be, "Wherever two or three are gathered in His name"? It is the old question asked there in Capernaum, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat and His blood to drink?" "Well," said Christ, "it must be." "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood you have no life in you; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

Now, to this question, How it can be? the Lutheran theologians reply in the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*. By this is meant the communication of attributes. The substance of the doctrine is that in the unity of the person of Christ one of the two natures communicates to the other its peculiarities or idiomata, without in any way confusing the essentials of both the divine and the human. That by virtue of its union with the divine in Christ the human was exalted and made to possess attributes which naturally belong to the divine. Nevertheless the human remains human. This was the view of Luther and of all who sympathized with him in his convictions on this subject.

This doctrine of the communication of divine

attributes to the human has its warrant in many passages of the Scriptures. In John 5 we are told that, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself," and hath given Him authority to "execute judgment also," because He is the Son of man. In Col. 2 : 9, Paul tells us that "in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Again, it is said of Christ that "God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name." Thus by the communication of divine attributes the human in Christ is glorified and made to be present wherever the divine is or wills to be. Inseparably conjoined to the divine the human in Christ is wherever He is; for it is not one nature of Christ that is present everywhere, but the whole Christ; that is to say, the divine and the human, for both constitute the Christ.

Now in this there is something very surprising. For this answer to the objection that, since the body of Christ according to its very idea is material, it cannot be present in different places at the same time, as the doctrine of the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament re-

quires us to believe, was given long before science had directed its attention intelligently to a study of the nature of matter itself. It was in the year 1577 that the Formula of Concord was adopted. Yet when its statement concerning the *communicatio idiomata* are put side by side with the recent utterances of science concerning the nature and properties of matter, it will be found that they spake wiser than they knew. It is but another illustration of the fact that it is always safe to follow the plain teaching of the Word, no matter as to where it seems to lead. For Scripture rightly interpreted can never be at war with true science. And this is the marvelous thing, that in following the plain teaching of the Word the authors of the doctrine of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, though they knew it not, put themselves in perfect alignment with the last utterances of science in respect of the nature and properties of matter.

That the old theories of matter have been abandoned is common knowledge. That matter is an entirely different thing from what it was once thought to be is gladly admitted by all those whose investigations of its nature give them a

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right to speak.[1] It is now held that it exists not in one but in a variety of forms. That in its higher forms it loses many, if not all the qualities that belong to it in its lower. That as we leave the lower and proceed to the higher, matter partakes more and more of the nature of spirit. "As we pass from the lower to the higher forms," says Prof. Crooks, "matter more and more loses its ordinary properties and more and more assumes the character of radiant energy." Faraday, in his "Life and Letters," says: "If we conceive a change as far beyond vaporization as this is above fluidity, and then take into account also the proportional increased extent of alteration as the changes rise, we shall, perhaps, if we can form any conception at all, not fall far short of radiant matter; and as in the last conversion many qualities were lost, so here also many more would disappear."[2]

A familiar example of this is afforded in the various forms of water. In the form of ice, water is solid. It is inert, impenetrable, and, like all solids, possessed of three dimensions. In its

[1] Appendix, Note F.
[2] Appendix, Note G.

form as fluid it loses some of these qualities. In the form of steam it loses still others that it had in the form of ice, becomes invisible and assumes the nature of pure energy. The same law holds good in the case of many of the metals. They also exist under a variety of forms, and in their higher lose some of the properties that belong to them in their lower. The same is true of the body. Paul tells us that "All flesh is not the same flesh; but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes and another of birds. There are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another." Clearly in this passage the apostle has in mind our true, that is, our spiritual bodies, and his purpose is to show that they are not subject to the laws that hold in the realm of lower organisms. In other words, that in the constitution of the spiritual body matter exists in a different and higher form from the one which it assumes in what he calls *sarx,* or the baser flesh.

Herman Ulrici conceived of the spiritual body as a perfect fluid, something similar to the ether. He held that this fluid is devoid of atoms, that

it extends from a given center, permeating the entire structure of the body, operating instinctively and in co-operation with the vital forces. But someone will ask, Is not all this a mere conjecture? Is it indeed a fact that matter in its higher forms loses many of the qualities that belong to it in its lower, and assumes more and more the nature of spirit? Well, it is at least the teaching of science, the result of long and patient investigation of the nature and properties of matter.

But whatever may be our estimate of the value of scientific evidence in this particular, the correctness of its position is confirmed by the universal consciousness of men. For, somehow, we cannot rid ourselves of the conviction that there is a real difference between the body of one whose "conversation is in heaven" and that of the sensuous worlding; between, for illustration, the body of a St. John and that of the wicked and lustful Nero. The conviction is deep and universal that sensuousness leaves its marks on the body and debases it to the level, or even below that of the beasts; while, on the contrary, heavenly-mindedness imparts to it its own spiritual

qualities. Sin *does* debase the body. The innermost life and thoughts of men are written not only on the countenance but on the entire physical structure. It is not the body that leavens and changes the spirit, but the spirit that leavens and transforms the body. This is why St. Paul prays for his people that "their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus." He had no sympathy with that mysticism that despises the body and finds in it the source of all evil. That is Paganism. He thought of it as capable of being freed from the curse of sin, spiritualized and glorified. He thought of it as the "temple of the Holy Ghost," and, therefore, not to be made members of "an harlot." United as were the body and spirit in the beginning, they were never meant to be separated. The sanctified body and the sanctified spirit, in spite of sin, are to be united in the wedlock of the resurrection, never to be divorced. I know that in the King James' translation Paul is made to speak of "our vile bodies" as being changed and fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. But that is not a correct translation of the text. It is said that when Archbishop

Whately was dying his chaplain came to read the Scriptures and to comfort him, and, turning to this passage in Philippians, he read: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body." "Stop!" said the archbishop, "hand me the Greek Testament and I will translate it for you." The sick man read: "Our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change the body of our humiliation and fashion it like unto the body of His glory." This is what Paul thought of the body—something, indeed, humiliated by sin, abused, diverted from the purpose for which it was created, yet for all that "the temple of the Holy Ghost," and, therefore, sacred.

That it is capable of responding to the emotions of the spirit there is no question. That it is influenced, leavened, even transformed through the indwelling of a pure and heavenly spirit is the profound conviction of all who have thought deeply on the matter. Therefore it has come to pass that the painters of all ages have repre-

sented the bodies of the saints as lifted above the earth, while they have represented the bodies of the wicked as earthly and groveling. The reason assigned for the translation of Enoch is given in the words, "And Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." For the same reason the body of Elijah mounts upward in the fiery chariot and the companions of Moses seek in vain for his earthly tabernacle. The law seems to be that what is taken from the spirit is given to the body, and, contrariwise, what is given to the spirit is taken from the body.

Moreover, this conviction that the spirit imparts its own qualities to the body has its analogy in nature. Calcium sulphide in contact with the rays of the sun becomes luminous. Steel in contact with the magnet becomes magnetized. Water in contact with heat loses its qualities as water and becomes gas, or, if you please, pure energy. Well, in view of all this, are we not warranted in the belief that matter in our bodies, in vital contact with the spirit, takes on spiritual qualities, and, as a consequence of this contact, loses some of the attributes that belong to it in its lower forms? We are not passing beyond

the realm of experience or of exact science when we affirm that such is actually the case.[1]

That such a change took place in the body of our Lord during His earthly pilgrimage seems beyond question. It is significant that the accounts of His walking on the sea and of His various disappearances belong to the closing chapters of His earthly ministry. Does not this point to the fact that the divine in Christ gradually leavened the body inherited from the Virgin Mary and imparted to it those spiritual qualities whereby it was made possible for Him to walk on the sea, to vanish from the multitude, and, after His resurrection, though possessing a true body, to pass through closed doors and appear in bodily form to His disciples?[2]

Clearly in that appearance in the upper room the body of our Lord had lost a number of its natural attributes, and was lifted above the action of the laws that govern matter in its lower forms. Must not that perfect sympathy of the sinless man with the divine order of the universe have given Him a power over the body which was at

[1] Appendix, Note H.
[2] Appendix, Note I.

once divine and yet also natural? Through its relation to the divine in Christ we may believe that the material of His body was so spiritualized, so completely made the organ of His will as that through doors of brass or walls of adamant it could pass as easily as though these spaces were unoccupied. What was a natural body inherited from the Virgin Mary, through its contact with the divine in Him, became a spiritual body, yet at the same time the true body of our Lord.[1]

Now this is but another way of stating the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum*. It affords an illustration of what was said a moment ago, that in framing the doctrine the fathers of our Church spoke wiser than they knew, and at the same time confirms the truth that it is always best to follow the path indicated by the Word, no matter where it may seem to lead. The wisdom of such a course is sure to be confirmed by the enlightened judgment of the centuries that follow. Almost three centuries and a half have passed since the doctrine of the *communicatio idiomatum* was put into the confession. During

[1]Appendix, Note J.

the years that have intervened between that day and ours the doctrine has often been ridiculed and its statement denied in the name of science. Yet to-day science acknowledges that her former declarations concerning the nature of matter have in many important respects been in error, and confesses even that it is altogether possible for a substance, material in nature, to be present in different places at the same time. In fact, it is to-day admitted that we know less of the nature and possibilities of matter than we do of almost anything else, while the conviction is more and more deepening that in the last analysis matter itself may be but a form of energy.

Permit me to close with a remarkable sentence from Dr. Martensen, late Bishop and theologian of Zeland: "All the four Gospel accounts of the resurrection seem to introduce two contrasted representations concerning the resurrected body of our Lord. The risen one seems now to have a human, natural life in a body such as He had before His death. He has flesh and bones, He eats and drinks; again, on the contrary, He seems to have a body of a spiritual, transcendental kind, which is independent of the

limitations of time and space. He enters through closed doors; He stands suddenly in the midst of His disciples, and as suddenly becomes invisible to them. This contradiction which occurs in the appearance of the risen One, during the forty days, may be explained on the supposition that during the interval His body was in a state of transition and of change, upon the boundaries of both worlds and possessed the impress and character of both of these worlds. Not until the moment of His ascension can we suppose His body fully glorified and free from all earthly limitations and wants like the spiritual body of which Paul speaks."

Nevertheless the body that was His after the resurection was His true body. "Reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless but believing." That is to say, "I am the same Jesus who was crucified, and these nail-prints are but the proofs that I am the same and not another." "Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." That is, "Mine is a material body spiritualized—made the perfect organ of the spirit."

So we believe that the true body of our Lord,

glorified and exalted above the action of the laws that hold in the realm of lower matter is the body that He offers in the Holy Sacrament. Not the flesh that hungered and thirsted, that suffered and was weary during His pilgrimage here below, but the glorified, that is to say, the *true* body of Christ. Therefore we condemn the fleshly eating of our Lord's body in the Sacrament. No Capernaitic or fleshly eating of the body of Christ can appease the infinite hunger of man. Nor does Christ mock us by the offering of His earthly flesh as food. Verily the flesh profiteth nothing. That body to which came hunger and thirst and weariness; that body which was nailed to the cross, though offered as food, could not help us. It is the true, the permanent, the finished, the resurrected and glorified body of Christ that is offered. And this alone can nourish us and become for us our living, because the "true bread that came down from heaven."

APPENDIX

Note A

That St. Paul did not believe that the consecrated bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Christ is clear from his words in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. His intention was to recover the reverential celebration of the Lord's Supper. That in rebuking the disgraceful excesses of which he speaks he makes no use of the awful argument which would have come at once to a priest of Rome or even to the ritualistic priests of the Church of England, is proof from which there can be no appeal that he did not believe in the Romish doctrine of transubstantiation.

Note B

The important question is as to whether the words of institution in this passage and others are to be interpreted literally or figuratively. In a thoughtful article on the Lord's Supper in the "Lutheran Cyclopedia," by Prof. H. E. Jacobs, this statement occurs: "In favor of the literal interpretation the Lutheran Church has urged the harmony of these sources, as there is scarcely any variation in the words of the institution which they report. If any other than a literal interpretation be adopted, it would follow that the New Testament contains a doctrine which is nowhere stated in literal words. With such a precedent, the allegorizing process might extend without limit and all certainty concerning the doctrines of the Holy Scripture would be at an end.

Besides, this would conflict with the very nature of the New Testament, which replaces the types and figures of the Old Testament with the substance to which they pointed (Col. 2 : 17; Heb. 10 : 1). The words of institution also were those of a last *will* and *testament.* Testators do not employ rhetorical, but the most literal and explicit terms. The burden of proof actually falls not on the advocates of a literal, but of a figurative interpretation."

That St. Paul understood the words literally, is evident from his words: "The bread is the *communion of the body* of Christ; the cup is the *communion of the blood* of Christ." That is to say, the reception of the bread and wine is the reception of the body and blood of Christ.

This, in the institution, says Bengel, "is contrasted with the old shadows, and means, 'You have myself.' Body must be understood as literally as blood. *This,* the true blood of Christ, is shown to be actually present just as the blood of the victims in the Mosaic formula (Heb. 9.20), for that formula is here referred to."

"The importance attached to the words in which Christ institutes and explains the Sacrament, varies concomitantly with the belief in the divinity of the speaker. If the speaker be held to be only a man, then, in order to avoid imputing to Him language of inflated and thoughtless folly, it becomes necessary to empty the words of their natural and literal force by violent exegetical processes, which, if applied generally would equally destroy the witness of the New Testament to the atonement, or to the divinity of Christ. But if Christ be in very truth believed to be the eternal Son of God, then the words in which He provides for the communication of His life-giving humanity in His

Church to the end of time, may well be allowed to stand in all the force and simplicity of their natural meaning. Baptism will then be the 'laver' of 'real regeneration'; the Eucharist will be a real 'communion of the body and blood' of the incarnate Jesus. If, with our eye upon Christ's actual Godhead, we carefully weigh the momentous sentences in which He ordained, and the still more explicit terms in which He explained His institutions; if we ponder well His earnestly enforced doctrine that they who would have part in eternal life must be branches of the living vine whose trunk is Himself; if we listen to His apostles proclaiming that we are members of His body, from His flesh and bones, then in a sphere so inaccessible to the measurements of natural reason, so abundantly controlled by the great axioms of faith, it will not seem incredible that as many as have been 'baptized into Christ' should really 'have put on Christ,' or that the body of Jesus Christ which was given for us should now, when received sacramentally, preserve our souls unto everlasting life."—*Liddon's "Bampton Lectures," pp. 481, 482.*

NOTE C

"That Christ's corporeal nature before His crucifixion was the same as ours is not only witnessed by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. 2 : 14. Compare 1 John 4 : 2, 3), but is implied in the gospel history of His life throughout. His body as to its material was 'earthly,' and as to its organic relation to His inner human nature *natural.* Paul does not identify the material side of man with evil. The flesh is not the native seat and source of sin. It is only its organ and the seat of sin's manifestations. Matter is not essentially evil. The logical consequence of this would be that no service of God is possible while the

material organ remains (Rom. 12 : 1). The flesh is not necessarily sinful in itself; but as it has existed from the time of the introduction of sin through Adam, it is recognized by Paul as tainted with sin. Jesus appeared in the flesh and yet was sinless."—*Muller, "Doctrine of Sin," p. 207.*

"In Rom. 8 : 3, Paul tells us that Christ came 'in the likeness of sinful flesh.' Literally, '*of the flesh of sin.*' The choice of words is especially noteworthy. Paul does not say simply, He came *in flesh* (1 John 4 : 2; 1 Tim. 3 : 16), for this would not have expressed the bond between Christ's manhood and sin. Not *in the flesh of sin,* which would have represented Him as partaking of sin. Not *'in the likeness of flesh,'* since He really was human; but *in the likeness of the flesh of sin;* really human, conformed in appearance to the flesh whose characteristic is sin, yet sinless."—*Vincent, "Word Studies in the New Testament," Vol. 3, p. 85.*

"Christ appeared in a body which was like that of other men in so far as it consisted of flesh, and was *unlike in so far as the flesh was not flesh of sin."—Dickson, "St Paul's Use of the Terms Flesh and Spirit."*

NOTE D

"We may suppose that an invisible and indestructible germ of the future body dwells already in the present, and that precisely therein is placed the guarantee of the identity of the two; an identity even amidst the greatest possible differences. The *soma pneumatikon* of the redeemed is in its innermost essence identical with the present body of man; so that the latter is to be regarded as the unexpanded germ of the former, the former as the glorious development of the latter."

—Van Oosterzee, "Christian Dogmatics," Vol. 2, p. 787.

NOTE E

"We are logically constrained to admit the existence of some frame or organ which is not of this earth, and which survives dissolution, if we regard the principle of continuity and the doctrine of the future state as both true. Besides, the analogy of Paul in which the body of the believer at death is compared to a seed put in the ground, not only implies some sort of continuity, but also expresses his belief in the present spiritual body. There *is*, says the apostle—not there shall be—a spiritual body. Again the same apostle tells us (2 Cor. 5 : 1) that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved we *have* a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—*"Unseen Universe," p. 203.*

NOTE F

Without doubt the common and most persistent objection to the view just presented of the presence of the body and the blood of Christ in the Sacrament arises from a false notion of the nature of matter itself. In a text-book of natural philosophy lying before me, we are told that the essential properties of matter are *extension, impenetrability* and *inertia.* Extension is defined as meaning that every portion of matter, however small, has length, breadth and thickness, and, therefore, occupies space. By impenetrability is meant that matter excludes all other matter from the space that it occupies. By inertia is meant the tendency of matter to continue in its present condition as to motion and rest. Unfortunately this old idea of matter yet holds its place in the minds of many. The idea still prevails that of all knowledge that which we possess of the nature

of matter is the most intimate and complete. "Of what can we know more than of the material things with which we are brought into daily contact?" "Matter is something that we know through our sense faculties." Yet there is no greater mistake than this notion that we know matter in all its forms by the senses. Matter only in its lower forms can so be known. In its higher forms it is removed entirely from the circle of sense knowledge. It is something that cannot be seen or felt; something which *does not exclude other forms of matter from the same space.* In fact, it is now admitted that we know less of the nature of matter than we do of most things.

Then, too, it is often forgotten that matter exists in a variety of forms, and that in its higher forms it loses some, if not all, of the qualities which belong to it in its lower. It is now admitted that neither extension nor impenetrability are properties of matter in its higher, but only in its lower forms. Boscovich believed that the idea of substance was not essential; and even so great an experimental philosopher as Faraday may be quoted as to some extent agreeing with him. That our knowledge of matter is, to say the least, but hazy, will be admitted by all who have given their lives to its study. Some of its properties we indeed know, but what matter is in itself we know no more than did Democritus or Lucretius. That there is, however, nothing in the nature of matter to preclude the presence of the body of our Lord from being present *with* and *under* the bread in the Eucharist is clear from the testimony of many of the most renowned scientists.

Note G

"The deservedly famous Dr. Young has the following passage in his lecures on Natural Philosophy: 'We

see forms of matter, differing in subtility and mobility, under the name of solids, liquids and gases; above these are the semi-material existences, which produce the phenomena of electricity and magnetism and either caloric or a universal ether. Higher still, perhaps, are the causes of gravitation and the immediate agents in attractions of all kinds which exhibit some phenomena apparently still more remote from all that is compatible with our material bodies. And of these different orders of beings, *the more refined and immaterial appear to pervade freely the grosser.* It seems, therefore, natural to believe that the analogy may be continued still further, until it rises into existences absolutely immaterial and spiritual. We know not but that thousands of spiritual worlds may exist unseen forever by human eyes; nor have we any reason to suppose that even the presence of matter in a given spot necessarily excludes these existences from it."—*"Unseen Universe," p. 201.*

NOTE H

"Whatever we may think of the claims of Swedenborg, it will not be denied that his system is that of a great thinker. Many have been the great men who have not hesitated to express their admiration of him and his work. It is one thing, however, to admit the beauty, the philosophical completeness of many of his statements, and another to believe that he actually conversed with the inhabitants of another world. It is the profoundness of his thought, and not his errors, that should constitute our measure of the man. Speaking of man's moral nature, Swedenborg tells us that 'Man at his birth puts on the grosser substance of nature, his body consisting of such. This grosser substance by death he puts off, but retains the purer substances of nature which are next to those that are spiritual.

These purer substances serve thereafter as his body, the content and expression of his mind.' His idea was that 'Man is a spirit now inhabiting a body.' 'The spirit clothes itself with the body as with a living garment.' 'The body is formed by the spirit and formed on the spirit.' 'Death frees the spirit from the outer body.' This body is laid away in the grave. The spirit does not, however, pass into an unclothed existence. It is clothed with a new garment of matter. The inner spiritual form is the counterpart of the outer earthly body in every vital respect."—*W. White, "Life and Writings of Swedenborg."*

The idea that the soul creates for itself a body is not only a natural one but, if we accept the statement of so eminent authority as Dr. Thomson, is also a fact confirmed by experiment. In a remarkable book, entitled "Brain and Personality," Dr. Thomson makes the following statements:

"We can make our own brains, so far as special functions are concerned, if we only have wills strong enough to take the trouble." (P. 217.)

"It is the will alone which can make material seats for the mind, and when made they are the most personal things in man's body. . . . So long as his brain matter has not become 'set,' as potters would express it, by the lapse of years, he deals with his cortical gray matter by the purposive exercise of memorizing habit, as the potter deals with the clay. And wondrously does he fashion it, until it no more resembles the gray matter of the other side of his head in mental capacities than unfashioned clay resembles a Portland vase." (P. 232.)

"All acquired endowments, therefore, are acquired by the modification of the material comprising the

speaking half of the brain. This speaking half of the brain did not originally have a single one of these great functions, not a single place for them, any more than its fellow-hemisphere has to the end of life. They are all stamped, as it were, each in its respective place in the speaking hemisphere by a single creative agency." (P. 271.)

"The mental and moral equipment of man seems sufficient for any future life, however limitless its conditions. Locality, which held such exclusive place in ancient conceptions, can be wholly subordinated now to questions about states of being. We can now conceive of a body no longer made of the most temporary forms of matter which is itself passing away, but fashioned to be a dynamic body, a body of power which need not shrink, as here, from the heavy burden of will." (P. 314.)

Even Prof. Huxley, though a materialist, comes dangerously near the position that thought has power to create for itself an organ. In his Belfast address he tells us that, "It is not to be doubted that those motions which give rise to sensations leave on the brain changes in its substance which answer to what Haller called *vestiga rerum*. The sensation which has passed away leaves behind molecules of the brain competent to its reproduction which constitute the physical foundation of memory."

Note I

This was the opinion of Julius Muller: "We may," he says, "suppose that, upon the principle of development, the change in Christ's risen humanity was not wholly accomplished at the moment of His ascension, but that there had been going on, from the day of His resurrection, a development of His glorified corporeity, which expanded from its bud into its perfect bloom in

the ascension. The process must be conceived of as progressing outwards from within; the spirit gradually penetrated his corporeity and so molded it that it became—what in idea it was to be—its pure and perfectly transparent exponent (*soma pneumatikon*). . . . Though the resurrection must be regarded as the turning point when the glorifying and spiritualizing process in Christ's body began to approach its consummation in the ascension, we cannot limit this process within these two events. It may have been going on gradually even before His death without in the least deteriorating from the reality of His earthly body. There is one event indicating this in the gospel history; I mean the transfiguration which took place shortly before His passion; a manifestation of the hidden glory of His body to His most trusty disciples."

Note J

The author is not unaware that this conception of the body of our Lord is not in harmony with the teaching of the Formula of Concord that, "The God-man partakes, ever since He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of the absolute fullness of Deity; that as a babe, as a child and as a man He was almighty, omnipresent and omniscient; that while possessing these divine attributes He in His state of humiliation abstained from their use." To him the statement of the Augsburg Confession, "true man," is capable of but one interpretation, viz., that, as to His mental and physical nature, He was truly human and subject to human necessities; to hunger, thirst, weariness, physical pain and suffering. As truly human, there was of necessity a gradual development from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood; that this growth and development apply not only to the physical but

also to the mental. "Birth in time," says Martensen, "is necessarily connected with the notion of a progress from unconsciousness to consciousness, of possibility to actuality, of a grain of seed and germ to ripe organization; and any view of the birth of the God-man inconsistent with these conditions must be characterized as Docetical." To suppose that He had or could have had in the cradle the thoughts that He expressed at a later period in His life, is to destroy His reality as a human person as well as to disqualify Him for His work as High Priest and Redeemer. According to the teaching of the New Testament writers the Redeemer is always a man "touched with a feeling for our infirmities, having in all points been tempted like as we are." The mediator is (1 Tim. 2 : 5) a man Christ Jesus. It is the Son of man (Mark 13 : 26) who comes to judgment; the Son of man (John 6 : 27) who gives the bread of life. What is needed in one who would be our perfect priest and representative is perfect manhood. Luther says: "The humanity of Christ, like another holy, natural man, has not at all times thought, spoken, willed all things, although some make an almighty man of Him, and unwisely mingle the two natures and their work together." On Luke 2 he says: "The words, 'He increased in spirit and wisdom,' must stand fast, and all peculiar, imaginary articles of faith, which would put themselves in opposition to this word, are to be allowed to go; one must understand the words according to their simplest signification. Whether He was at all times full of spirit and grace, the Spirit did not at all times move Him, but now urged Him to this and now to that. Whether He was in Him from the commencement of His conception, still, just as His body grew and His reason increased, in a natural manner, as other men, so the Spirit rested upon Him ever

more and more, and moved Him more and more. That there may be no dissimulation, Luke says, 'He became strong in spirit,' but as the words sound clear, it also follows most plainly that the older He became the greater He really grew before God and in Himself and before the people, and the greater the more rational, and the more rational the stronger in spirit and wisdom, and no gloss can be tolerated here. And this understanding is free from danger, and there is no force in the fear as to whether it conflicts with their imaginary article of faith."

For a full discussion of the matter see Dorner's "System of Christian Doctrine," Vol. 3, pp. 223-238. Also Dorner's "Person of Christ," Div. 1, Vol. 1, pp. 213-216. Also Schaff's "Creeds of Christendom," Vol. 1, p. 320. Also Kahnis' "Lutheran Dogmatic," Vol. 8, pp. 338 *seq.*

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